

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

JUL 28 2004

LUTHER D. THOMAS, Clerk  
By: *Judith M. [Signature]*  
Deputy Clerk

In the matter of

ADOPTING A POLICY ON : STANDING ORDER NO. 04 - 02  
SENSITIVE INFORMATION AND :  
PUBLIC ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC :  
CASE FILES :

**ORDER**

This matter comes before the Court because the Judicial Conference of the United States, had adopted a national policy on sensitive information and public access to electronic case files. The policy was adopted to protect sensitive information of litigants appearing in the United States Courts while providing for a more efficient access to court case files. This Court intends to make electronic access to court case files available through Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER)<sup>1</sup> by imaging documents into the Court's computer system. Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. In compliance with the policy of the Judicial Conference of the United States, and the E-Government Act of 2002, in order to promote public electronic access to case files while also protecting personal privacy and sensitive information and other legitimate interests, parties shall refrain from including, or shall partially redact where inclusion is necessary, the following personal identifiers from all documents filed with the Court, Including exhibits thereto, whether filed electronically or in paper, unless otherwise ordered by the Court:
  - a. Social Security Numbers. If an individual's social security number must be included in a pleading, only the last four digits of that number should be used.


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<sup>1</sup>PACER is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case information from the federal courts. PACER is a service of the United States Judiciary, provided by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. PACER allows a registered user to access case information through the Internet or a dial-up connection using a computer and a modem.

- b. Names of minor children. If the involvement of a minor child must be mentioned, only the initials of that child should be used.
  - c. Dates of birth. If an individual's date of birth must be included in a pleading, only the year should be used.
  - d. Financial account numbers. If financial account numbers are relevant, only the last four digits of these numbers should be used.
  - e. Home addresses. If a home address must be included, only the city and state should be listed.
- 2. In compliance with the E-Government Act of 2002, a party wishing to file a document containing the personal data identifiers listed above may file an unredacted document under seal. This document shall be retained by the court as part of the record. The court, may, however, still require the party to file a redacted copy for the public file.
  - 3. The responsibility for omitting or redacting these personal identifiers rests solely with counsel and the parties. The Clerk will not review filings for compliance with this rule. Counsel and the parties are cautioned that failure to redact these personal identifiers may subject them to sanctions or other disciplinary proceedings as appropriate.
  - 4. A party having a legitimate need for the above information may obtain it through the ordinary course of discovery without further order of the Court.
  - 5. Social Security cases shall be excluded from electronic public access except for judiciary employees, the United States Attorney or their representatives and litigants.
  - 6. This policy in no way creates a private right of action against the Court, the Clerk of the Court, counsel or any other individual or entity on behalf of any individual of entity that may have identifying information or erroneously included in a filed document that is made available on the Internet via PACER.
  - 7. This Order does not limit the application of Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for any willful or deliberate violation of this Order.

This policy shall go into effect on August 15, 2004 after notice to the bar and public and will apply to all documents filed on or after the effective date.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 27 day of July, 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orinda D. Evans", written over a horizontal line.

ORINDA D. EVANS  
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE